

## Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9326

INFO DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0750

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BM

SUBJ: MILITARY TRANSFERS

REF: RANGOON 0722

1. SUMMARY: WE UNDERSTAND FROM A SOURCE WHO ACCURATELY REPORTED THE MILITARY SHIFTS INVOLVED THE RECENT CABINET RESHUFFLE BEFORE THEIR ANNOUNCEMENT (REFTEL), THAT THE FOLLOWING ASSIGNMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO REPLACE KEY ARMY OFFICERS NAMED LAST WEEK TO VARIOUS CABINET POSITIONS. END OF SUMMARY.

2. COL. AYE KO, CURRENTLY COMMANDER OF THE NORTHWEST COMMAND, WILL ASSUME CHARGE OF THE RANGOON COMMAND (RANGOON 681). THE 52 YEAR OLD COLONEL ENJOYS THE RIGHT CREDENTIALS FOR THIS KEY POST; STUDENT ACTIVIST BEFORE THE WAR, MEMBER OF BIA AND BDA AND A VETERAN OF THE 4TH BURMA RIFLES, NE WIN'S OLD UNIT. HIS BACKGROUND, LIKE MOST OF THOSE NAMED, IS LARGELY STRAIGHT MILITARY WITH LITTLE EVIDENCE OF SIGNIFICANT BSPP ACTIVITY ALTHOUGH HE LIKE ALMOST ALL OTHER REGIONAL COMMANDERS, IS A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER. AYE KO SERVED PREVIOUSLY AS DEPUTY CO OF THE 88TH DIVISION AND FROM 1972-74 AS CHIEF OF THE NORTHWEST COMMAND. HE WAS PROBABLY PICKED BY NE WIN FOR THE SENSITIVE RANGOON COMMAND. THERE HAVE BEEN PAST SUGGESTIONS THAT INDICATE HE COULD BE A SUPPORTER OF GENERAL SAN YU AS WELL.

3. COL. YAN NAUNG SOE, CURRENTLY CO OF THE 77TH DIVISION WILL TAKE  
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THE CENTRAL COMMAND. YAN NAUNG SOE, 48, BELONGS TO THE SLIGHTLY

YOUNGER GENERATION OF TOP OFFICERS HAVING JOINED THE ARMY AFTER WW II. ASIDE FROM A BRIEF STINT AT BSPP HEADQUARTERS AND THE PARTY'S CENTRAL SCHOOL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, YAN NAUNG SOE'S CAREER HAD APPARENTLY BEEN STRAIGHT MILITARY. HE HAS SERVED AS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 77TH DIVISION AND DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE SOUTHEAST COMMAND.

4. COL. TUN KYI, CO OF THE 88TH DIVISION, WILL HEAD THE SOUTHEAST COMMAND. ANOTHER OF THE POST-WAR GENERATION, THE 46 YEAR OLD TUN KYI ENLISTED IN THE 3RD BURMA RIFLES IN 1946 (GENERAL SAN YU'S OLD COMMAND). HE TOO SEEMS TO HAVE LITTLE DIRECT ASSOCIATION WITH THE BSPP AND MOST OF HIS CAREER HAS BEEN SPENT IN LINE ASSIGNMENTS. HE SERVED AS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 77TH DIVISION FROM 1970-72 AND SUBSEQUENTLY DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE SOUTHEAST COMMAND. HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE 3RD BURMA RIFLES COULD LINK HIM WITH SAN YU.

5. COL. HLA TUN, COMMANDER OF THE WESTERN COMMAND, NOW ASSUMES CHARGE OF THE NORTHWEST COMMAND. 46 YEARS OLD HLA TUN ENLISTED IN 1946 AND ROSE TO THE RANK OF CAPTAIN WITHIN SAN YU'S 3RD BURMA RIFLES. HE HAS SERVED AS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 88TH DIVISION AND SPECIAL COMMISSIONER FOR NORTHERN SHAN STATE. HE HAS BEEN COMMANDER OF THE WESTERN COMMAND SINCE AT LEAST 1973. HE TOO MAY BE LINKED WITH SAN YU BECAUSE OF HIS PAST.

6. COL. MIN GAUNG, CO OF THE 99TH DIVISION, TO HEAD THE WESTERN COMMAND. MIN GAUNG, 49, DID NOT ENLIST IN THE ARMY UNTIL 1949. HE IS THE ONLY ONE OF THE KEY APPOINTMENTS WITH A SIGNIFICANT RECORD OF BSPP ACTIVITY. IN THE LATE 1960'S HE SERVED AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE NO. 5 BSPP REGIONAL SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE AND FROM 1971-74 SERVED AS KACHIN STATE PARTY REGIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

7. LOWER LEVEL TRANSFERS INCLUDE COL. MYO AUNG, COMMANDER OF THE SOUTHEAST COMMAND TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE; COL. WAN TIN, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 88TH DIVISION TO THE COMMAND OF THE 77TH DIVISION; COL. HLA U, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 88TH; AND COL. SAW MUANG, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE NORTHEAST COMMAND TO COMMANDER OF THE 99TH DIVISION.

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8. THOSE TRANSFERS AND THOSE REPORTED REFTEL APPEAR TO BE MORE THAN ROUTINE FOR REASONS WHICH WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE MESSAGE.  
LACEY

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## Message Attributes

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